(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal to upgrade the post of DG to Secretary of Health; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Theposts of Secretary, Health and Director General of Health Services are in the same pay scale. The question of upgradation, therefore, does not arise.

Price control of life saving medicines

3919. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA:

DR. AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Supreme Court has passed an interim order asking Government to lay down the criteria to bring essential and life saving medicines under price control by May 2,2003;

(b) whether Government have expressed the view that at present, the Ministry has no list of life saving drugs and is planning to bring down its list of essential drugs from 270 to 30; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps envisaged to satisfy the urgent needs of the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Supreme Court has directed to consider and formulate appropriate criteria for ensuring essential and life saving drugs not to fall out of price control.

(b) The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare does not formulate a separate list of life saving drugs. However, 126 drugs, not manufactured in this country, are categorized as Life Saving Drugs by Department of Revenue for purposes of import *vide* Notification No. 26/2003—customs dated 1-3-2003 which are exempted from custom duty. This Ministry has not expressed any view that it is planning to bring down the list of essential drugs from 270 to 30.

(c) The issue is under inter-ministerial consultation for appropriate action.